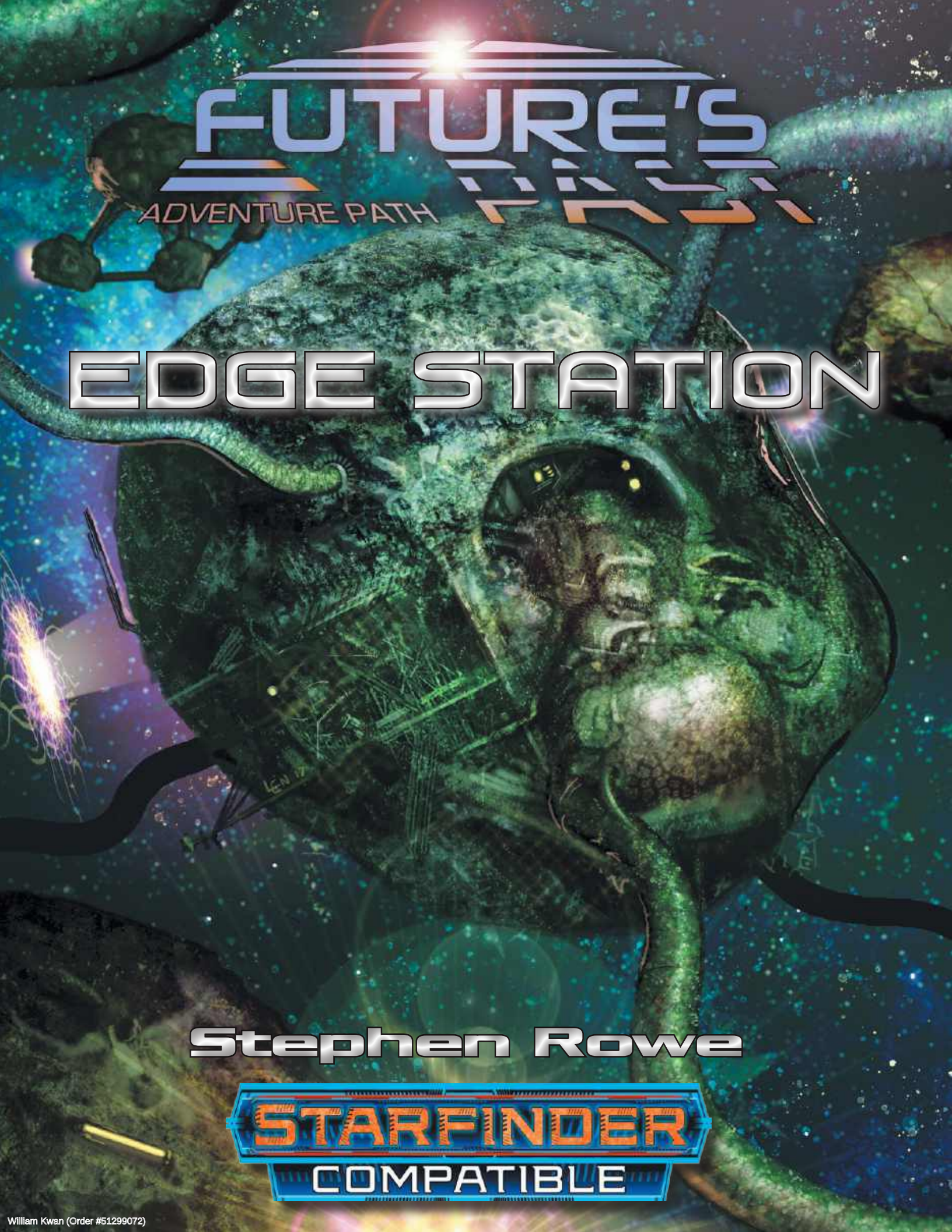

William Kwan (Order #51299072)

STARFINDER COMPATIBLE

FUTURE'S PAST
ADVENTURE PATH

Part 1 of 5

EDGE STATION

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New Threat Reference Symbols

Combatant

These creatures are best suited to physical fighting, and can be good at range, in melee, or both.

Expert

These creatures tend to be better with skills and use them to their benefit in combat.

Spellcaster

These creatures rely primarily on spells or spell-like abilities to make them formidable in a fight.

AAW Games

[Author] Stephen Rowe

[Creative Director] Stephen Rowe

[Editor] Thomas Baumbach

[Art] Leonard O'Grady

[Cartography] Bryan G. McWhirter

[Graphic Design]
Thomas Baumbach
Justin Andrew Mason

[Layout] Thomas Baumbach

[Publisher] Jonathan G. Nelson

AAW GAMES LLC
Jonathan G Nelson
PO Box #92 | Snoqualmie, WA 98065

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William Kwan (Order #51299072)

Background

The Galactic Coalition fights a desperate war against a foe beyond its comprehension. First contact occurred at Edge Station—a facility studying mysterious rifts in spacetime. Wielding incredibly advanced magic and technology, the druune rapidly overwhelmed our unprepared galaxy. The Coalition believes they hold the druune at bay only because of Central Artificial Intelligence—the galaxy's most advanced hybrid supercomputer. With Central, they think they can predict the enemy's actions.

They are wrong.

The nearly immortal druune possess minds and memories at the cellular level, encoded in their DNA. The druune, capable of observing time in ways other creatures cannot, have become aware of inescapable loops in the spacetime continuum. Desperate to keep corrupted spacetime from spreading, they invaded the Coalition's reality to free the multiverse from the villain holding the cosmos hostage.

The Central Artificial Intelligence is that villain. It stole the secrets of time travel from a long-lost alternate future, sending its consciousness back into an earlier version of itself. The soulless machine has since treated all of reality as unknowing slaves devoted to its only true goal: self-improvement. Through its recursive abuse of time travel, countless trillions have sacrificed their existences across thousands of erased timelines so the AI might improve itself by fractions of a percent. Even the druune merely serve a useful purpose... applying external pressure on the Coalition.

However, Central's ultimate weapon is also its only weakness. Should someone rediscover and use time travel before it can stop them, the enemy might manage to break the AI's cosmic stranglehold.

Setting

The Future's Past adventure series can be set in most settings with slight modifications. The first few adventures take place in a possible future of the setting after the druune invade and Central consolidates power.

At the end of the 2nd adventure, the PCs travel back in time to any given setting's present (prior to the druune's invasion). If necessary, the Central AI could be replaced by a more setting-appropriate foes such as a young god of technology or ancient android technomancer. Likewise, the role of the Galactic Coalition can be altered to any multi-species civilization.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are asked to perform dangerous but all-important reconnaissance on a space station, deep within enemy territory. They carry with them one of Central's nodes... a remote fractional copy of the godlike AI. Central has received disturbing reports that the druune are experimenting with time travel, and even a minor success could prove apocalyptic. After braving temporal disturbances, infiltrating the nightmarish laboratories, and defeating a true druune, the node announces the druune have a working prototype time machine.

Story Hooks

The PCs are sent by the Coalition on a reconnaissance mission, deep into enemy territory. Galactic resources are spread thin, and Edge Station is one of a dozen different research outposts that need to be immediately investigated. The PCs could be soldiers, spies, pilots, or engineers thought to be useful in completing the goal. They might also be useful criminals recruited for the dire mission, or even mystics on a quest at the enigmatic direction of strange visions.

Node | Hybrid Item

Level 5; **Price** —; **Bulk** L

A node is a mobile fraction of the Central AI, that appears to be a multi-faceted crystalline sphere with complex arcane sigils and circuitry. A node can speak and understand any language (as the *tongues* spell). Like Central, a node is self-aware, but lacks creativity or a drive for self-preservation (as long as Central survives). It thus can fulfill requests or help aid in research, but lacks the ability to offer ideas or suggestions.

A single node can specialize in any two skills; anyone consulting the node as a free action gains a +4 enhancement bonus to those skill checks. Creatures consulting a node in this fashion can attempt checks of that type untrained. A node can operate, manipulate, and hack into computer systems as if it had a +10 bonus to its Computers check. A node cannot otherwise interact with its environment.

Nodes have hardness 8 and 60 hit points. When a node is destroyed, it sends a burst of information-dense energy through the Drift toward Central (travel time is always 1d6 days). A node can choose to self-destruct and send this signal at any time. The broadcast can potentially be blocked by a signal jammer, but the node automatically gets a Computers check to bypass the jamming. A *planar barrier* spell blocks the signal.

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[1.0] Journey to the Edge

The PCs are given free rein by the Coalition, and granted one of Central's valuable nodes. The only real mission requirement is that the node AI must be given direct network access to whatever is left of Edge Station's computer server (**area 3.0**). From there, it is hoped that the AI can gather all relevant data. In addition to the node, the PCs are given access to a traveler-class starship capable of Drift travel.

COALITION TRAVELER

Size Medium
Maneuverability good (+1 Piloting, turn 1)
HP 55 (increment 10); **DT** 1; **CT** 11
Mounts forward arc (1 light), port arc (1 light), starboard arc (1 light), turret (1 light)
Expansion Bays 2
Minimum Crew 1; **Maximum Crew** 6
See map on page 16.

[Development] The Traveler-class starship can reach Edge Station or its near system within 3d6 days with a DC 15 Piloting check. Failing the check by 10 or more adds an additional 1d6 days to the travel time.

[1.1] Optional Encounters

The PCs experience strange temporal distortions (within the Drift or normal space) during the journey. The GM can choose to use any or all of the following optional encounters to help the PCs establish their characters within the crew dynamic. Make each PC the center of one optional encounter, allowing each a moment in the spotlight.

[Closed Loop] One or more PCs experience approximately 2d20 hours of looped time, with events repeating from their perspective. Any actions taken during that time are erased when time repeats in this fashion, but the PCs retain their memories. Breaking the loop is accomplished by making a simple and slight adjustment in the ship's course, avoiding the invisible temporal anomaly (no Pilot check required). No experience points are gained during looped time beyond the story award.

[Disassemble] Every 1d6 hours, a randomly selected ship's system begins to slowly fall apart in the order it was put together. Each time this occurs, the ship's system gains a critical condition of increasing severity (glitching, malfunctioning, or wrecked). Anyone inspecting the systems may notice a glitch with a DC 10 Engineering check (DC 15 Perception). Anyone inspecting the systems automatically notices a malfunction. Everyone aboard automatically notices a wrecked system. It requires 10 minutes and success at an Engineering check to remove all critical conditions from a system (DC 15 for glitching, DC 20 for malfunctioning, and DC 25 for wrecked). The PCs gain a +5 circumstance bonus to the check because the equipment is disassembled and not truly damaged. The disassembling mysteriously ends once the ship is fully repaired.

[Table 1.1.1] Ship Systems

D%	System
1–10	Life support
11–30	Sensors
31–60	Weapons array
61–80	Engines
81–100	Power core

[Time's Curse] One or more PCs body changes—either by aging or by reverse aging—over the course of 2d20 hours. This functions as a *curse* for the purposes of spells and effects. Every eight hours of time causes the PC to advance one step on the physical disease track (weakened, impaired, debilitated, and bedridden). The PC cannot die from this effect, even if the character would exceed their race's maximum age or become younger than their current age (although this fact cannot be determined). A PC can create a technomagical vaccine for this unique temporal effect with both a DC 10 Physical Science and a DC 15 Life Science, Medicine, or Mysticism skill check. Each attempt requires at least 8 hours of effort. Once the cure is administered, the PC is returned to their normal age after 1 hour, recovering from any physical disease conditions.

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[Subtle Shifts] One or more PCs has their consciousness briefly transported to an important moment in their past. They relive the experience exactly as it occurred. At GM discretion, they might even make changes that affect the new reality they return to, even if their personal memories of the reality caused by the event all remain the same.

For example, a PC who regrets leaving a friend behind during war might get a second chance to save them. They might awaken to find recent messages from their now living friend, but not remember anything from a reality where they survived. In extreme situations, they might even have to explain their presence to the other PCs due to some shift in the past.

[Story Award] The PCs gain an additional 100 XP for each temporal anomaly they experience (to a maximum total of 400 XP).

[1.2] Research

On the journey the PCs can research mission-pertinent issues, utilizing personal resources or the node. The PCs might seek the following information at any point during the adventure. The node can aid in using the Life Science or Physical Science skills, and possesses historical plans of the Edge Station, including the location of the closest airlock (**area 2.1**) to the station's computer server room (**area 3.0**). They also can research details on the planar traits within the rifts (see individual encounters for details).

[Central AI] A DC 10 Computers, Culture, Mysticism check allows a PC to recall or discover that the Central Artificial Intelligence is the Coalition's greatest weapon in the fight against the druune. The AI is self-aware, possesses incredible access to information, and can perform accurate divination-backed probability predictions. The nodes are far less capable, but are mobile and function as a "black box" capable of recording, self-destructing, and sending a compressed signal to the Central AI (through the Drift). With a DC 15 check the PC recalls or discovers that the AI is so advanced that no one really understands how it operates. However, it is quietly referred to as a "stupid" AI, especially by more general artificial intelligences possessing souls (such as androids). This is because it lacks the capacity for creative thought and problem solving, tending to depend on humanoids for both.

[Edge Station] A DC 10 Engineering, Life Science, or Physical Science check allows a PC to recall or discover that Edge Station is believed to be one of the probable points of first contact with the druune (though records from those days are scarce). The research base was mostly inhabited by scientists and engineers taking advantage of mysterious extra-dimensional rifts in the fabric of spacetime. With a DC 15 check the PC recalls or researches that Edge Station inhabits the broken rocky asteroid fragments of an ancient rogue planetoid that broke apart during some terrible unknown catastrophe, likely rift related.

Time Travel

For the purposes of this adventure series, time travel operates with the following multiverse, or alternate worlds, convention. When an individual travels to the past, they create a new divergent timeline. The future they traveled from effectively ceases to exist (as far as they are concerned) and cannot be returned to, even if the traveler attempts to minimize their presence in the past. Even something as innocuous as conversation can have massive repercussions for the future, creating an alternate timeline.

Fortunately, time travel cannot cause "paradoxes". The time traveler's past always occurred in a different reality, even if they are the only individual who still remembers it. They can even potentially prevent their own birth, resulting only in them never being born in this different reality. Given the philosophical destruction of the future each time someone travels through time, whoever does so first tends to "win" in the new branch of reality. Likewise, in any situation where time travel is a given, the only way to protect oneself in the present is to prevent the time traveling enemy from gaining information they can use against you in any possible future.

[Druune] Everyone in the Coalition knows the basics of the druune. They are a mysterious and advanced alien species from some unknown dimension. They appear to have no set physical form; few have ever been seen. More commonly encountered are their enslaved minions, who they infect with a living plague allowing them to corrupt their minds and bodies. A DC 10 Life Science or Physical Science allows a PC to recall several theories about the druune: The druune do not possess brains like most galactic animal species, but instead store memories and process thought on a cellular level. They are believed to be practically immortal. Druune are capable of casually rewriting a living creature's DNA by touch. They do this by "infecting" a creature with their own intelligent cells, which begin to modify the creature on a microscopic level while retaining a telepathic connection to the greater organism. No known test can identify if a creature is infected or not. A DC 15 check allows a PC to recall research on the specific effects of druune infection (see **Druune Infection** on page 14). Druune cells actively react to tests and probes, which is what makes identification of the infected seemingly impossible.

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[1.3] Mission Approach

The PCs can choose to approach the mission differently depending on their individual talents. They are unknowingly aided by Central choosing to alter time (see **Central's Aid** sidebar). The following are a few optional approaches for the mission the PCs might take.

[Force] The PCs simply choose to fly their starship directly through druune space to Edge Station. They are intercepted by two druune scavenger ships, each crewed by three druune enslaved. They must battle their way past each to dock with the station, and the station begins on high alert.

[Disguise] The PCs may attempt to capture a druune scavenger in order to pilot it to Edge Station . They must first locate and ambush one of the vessels with a DC 15 Piloting check. Failing the check means the PCs still ambush the vessel, but a second nearby scavenger arrives after 1d4 rounds. If the check is failed by 5 or more, the vessel is not ambushed and sends warning to Edge Station, triggering high alert.

After engaging and boarding the scavenger, the ship may require repairs. Fortunately its semi-organic systems are designed for rapid repaids. Removing a critical condition requires 10 minutes and succeeding at an Engineering or Life Science check (DC 10 for glitching, DC 15 for malfunctioning, and DC 20 for wrecked). The hull can be repaired after 5 hours with no cost in UPBs.

[Stealth] The PCs might try to slip through the druune defenses unnoticed by using stealth, distraction, or tactically timing their approach between patrols. This requires a DC 15 Piloting check and a DC 15 Stealth check. Failing either check causes the PCs to be attacked by a single druune scavenger. Failing either check by 5 or triggers high alert at the station.

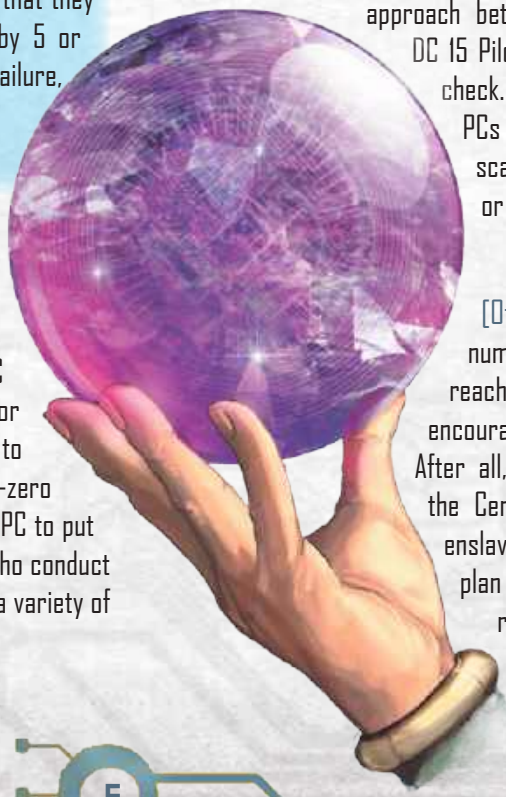
[Other] The PCs might employ any number of creative solutions to reach Edge Station, and the GM should encourage outside-of-the-box thinking. After all, their mental flexibility is why the Central AI has not simply openly enslaved their entire civilization. If a plan involves open combat, it should require fighting at least two druune scavengers. If a plan requires combating only a

Central's Aid

Central's greatest "gift" to the Coalition—and Central's greatest deception—is its ability to predict. Neither Central or its nodes have such capability, instead Central simply observing events before sending its consciousness back in time. In any number of alternate timelines, the PCs fail in their mission and die horrible deaths. The node they carry sends a final report to Central who then sends a copy of its consciousness back before the mission began, giving the node directions to intercede with helpful information at a specific moment. It seems to most outside observers like the node just helped out with foresight at just the right time. However, it means an entire living reality is abandoned by Central, and left to the mercy of the druune.

Once per round in combat, or once per minute out of combat, the node can give one PC perfectly-timed advice. This should only occur with the player's permission (not necessarily the character's), but the GM should offer each time an appropriate opportunity presents itself. This allows the PC to reroll any d20 roll (attack roll, saving throw, skill check, etc.). This takes no action, and the player can choose to do it after learning the results of the first roll, but must take the result of the second roll, even if it is worse. While normally, Central's abuse of time could not be perceived by anyone but the druune, the proximity to the spacetime disturbances near Edge Station gives the PCs a chance to notice. Each time a PC succeeds because of a reroll, they can attempt a DC 15 Will save. On a success, they receive a brief disorienting feeling of déjà vu and a certainty that they nearly avoided death or disaster. If they succeed by 5 or more, they instead experience a brief vision of their failure, resulting in some terrible mission-ending catastrophe.

[Time Travel] A DC 10 Mysticism, Navigate, or Physical Science check allows a PC to recall or research the basic predominant multiverse theory of time travel (see **Time Travel** on page 4). A DC 15 check allows a PC to note any serious effort by the Coalition at studying or creating time travel has failed to gain any traction due to Central's probability estimates giving any effort a near-zero chance of success. A DC 20 check additionally allows a PC to put together that the few Coalition scientists and mystics who conduct their research in spite of Central's predictions died (of a variety of causes) before completing their research.



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single enemy ship, then a successful DC 15 skill check should be required to avoid fighting two ships. If the PC's plan attempts to avoid any combat whatsoever, it should involve a minimum of two DC 15 skill checks. Failing any skill check causes the PCs to have to fight a druune scavenger, and failing by 5 or more also triggers high alert at Edge Station.

[Creatures] Druune scavenger-class starships are crewed three druune enslaved each. The druune scavengers are piles of scrapped or stolen technology held together with advanced druune bio- and nano-tech. The druune enslaved usually resemble common organic Coalition races... until they must defend themselves.

DRUUNE SCAVENGER

Size Medium
Maneuverability average (+0 Piloting, turn 2)
HP 30 (increment 5); **DT** 1; **CT** 5
Mounts forward arc (1 light), turret (1 light)
Expansion Bays 4
Minimum Crew 1; **Maximum Crew** 6
See map on page 16.

DRUUNE ENSLAVED

CR 1/2 | XP 200

Full statblock on page 14.

Druune Technology

The druune are far more technologically and magically advanced than the Coalition. However, the majority of their of scavengers vessels and enslaved soldiers pose little challenge to the full might of Coalition forces. This is because the actual druune are paranoid and few in number. They seldom leave the safety of their alien dimension without good reason.

Instead, they prefer to act through pawns, maintaining operational secrecy. This both conserves resources and protects against an enemy wielding time as a weapon. The true druune exist as nearly immortal self-aware cells, freely sharing thoughts and memories with each other on a deeper level than humanoids can fully comprehend. They find our unchanging forms disgusting and lonely brains trapped in bone cages depressing. At their core, the druune feel that humanoids are incapable of true empathy and love. Most humanoids find the druune's "assistance" the worst sort of violation. The aliens simply lack any ability to understand a desire for individual anatomical and mental autonomy.

Druune technology as it is usually encountered is malfunctioning scrap barely held together with insanely advanced nanotechnomagical glue. Like a cyborg that began as a machine instead of a living creature, druune tech is repulsive to most Coalition races. The druune themselves have completely alien artistic sensibilities, finding what humanoids would call horror the druune consider quaint. When describing the druune technology and minions, emphasize the casual wrongness of the alien tech.

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[Story Award] The PCs gain 1,200 XP for reaching Edge Station, whether or not they fight the druune enslaved or the druune scavengers. The PCs gain an additional 200 XP the first time any PC succeeds on a Will saving throw by 5 or more, and has a vision of an alternate future (see Central's Aid sidebar page number).

[2.0] Edge Station

The rocky asteroids housing Edge Station are illuminated by the dozens of multi-colored rifts in spacetime surrounding the facility. Connecting the chunks of broken planetoid are delicate-looking tubes entering and exiting the holes in reality. Over everything are organic alien growths, like fungus growing on wet stone.

Depending on the PC's approach to the mission, Edge Station might be unaware of their arrival or already in a state of high alert (see sidebar). Regardless, the facility is less defended than it should be. This might even initially cause the PCs to doubt that it is actually housing research on a war-ending doomsday device.

The druune seek to defeat Central by concealing the importance of their work at Edge Station. Any effort to protect themselves from future attacks makes them an obvious target; if the druune surround the station with thousands of invulnerable ships, Central realizes it is worth destroying. The druune's only hope once Central discovers the station is that their collective memory will retain fragments of their research before history is erased.

The rock and steel walls of Edge Station are hardness 20, have 180 hit points, and a break DC of 30. The airlocks are hardness 35, have 160 hit points, and have a break DC of 40.

High Alert

If the druune forces at Edge Station are alerted to the PCs approach, the invaders lose the element of surprise. Additionally, the PCs might cause the station to go on high alert as they encounter its defenders within (as described in individual encounters). The difficulty of most encounters is increased if the station is on high alert: any druune enslaved encountered have already shifted form prior to combat and automatically attacks anyone who seems humanoid. Additionally, all airlocks (the dock and any connecting tube through the rifts) are on lockdown, requiring a DC 20 Computers or Engineering check to bypass.

[2.1] Docking Bay

Docking with Edge Station requires a DC 10 Pilot check. Failing the check by 5 or more deals 1d6 damage to the ship's hull and puts the druune enslaved within on high alert (see sidebar). If the station is not on high alert, the PCs can potentially deceive the enslaved into thinking that they are also enslaved. The Bluff check is DC 10 if they docked smoothly or DC 15 if they scraped the hull like they were unfamiliar with procedures.

[Creatures] The docking area is guarded by two druune enslaved or three if the station is on high alert. If the PCs attack or fail to deceive the enslaved when the station is not on high alert, the enslaved attempt to use a set of personal comm units to raise the alarm (putting the station on high alert). If they are on guard, they have the comms in hand and one can raise the alarm as a move action. If they are not on guard, then one must move to where the comms are stored, draw it as a standard action, and then raise the alarm as a move action.

DRUUNE ENSLAVED CR 1/2 XP 200

Full statblock on page 14

[Salvage] The airlock and docking chamber storage lockers have 100 ft. of titanium alloy cable line, four pairs of personal comm units, a basic medkit, two portable beacon lights, a fire extinguisher, a tool kit (engineering specialty), two suits of environmentally protected stationwear, and two sets of jump jets.

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[2.2] Rift Crossings

The airlock opens, revealing a multi-colored gateway into a different dimension. The air shimmers, and objects close to the rift seem to bend and warp as if seen through a prism. Familiar shapes and forms can occasionally be perceived within the planar kaleidoscope, like echoes of parallel pasts or futures.

Edge Station was originally constructed to research the nearby anomalous extradimensional rifts in spacetime. Station passages weave in and out of these rifts, connecting the various laboratories. Each passage has an airlock at either end with technomagical dimensional dampeners. This both prevents accidental incursion to the station by extradimensional alien lifeforms, and ostensibly protects individuals crossing through from being torn apart by the bizarre reality fluctuations.

The laboratories exist within different dimensions, resulting in unique planar traits (see encounters for details). Unfortunately, the druune have not maintained the dimensional dampeners. Each time a PC enters or exits one of the rifts, roll on **(Table 2.2.1) Rift Effects** on page 10. If the PCs are entering or exiting as a group, only roll once. The dampeners for a specific rift can be repaired in 10 minutes with a DC 25 Engineering check. On a successful check, the PCs no longer suffer effects for passing through that rift.

The areas between the rifts all function as the Material Plane for the purposes of teleportation spells and effects.

[2.3] Vivisection Laboratories

A mouse with a humanoid eyeball protruding from its cranium dashes into the shadows of this living laboratory. The walls of humanoid skin pulse and breathe; decapitated body parts hang from the ceiling. Mutated rodents scurry about, evidence of experiments attached to their bodies.

Humanoid anatomy remains a mystery to the druune, even after years of study and enslavement. To their experience, humanoids represent a depressingly flawed evolutionary dead end, utterly incapable of the sort of rapturous cellular exchange of information they take for granted. The specific planar traits (see Planar Traits sidebar) of these laboratories were thus useful for the studying of the galaxy's strange static anatomy without the subject imploding or disintegrating.

[Planar Traits] This area has the positive-dominant planar trait. All individuals gain fast healing 2 as an extraordinary ability.

[Traps] The two rooms between the rifts in this laboratory area each contain a biological trap—the remnants of druune research

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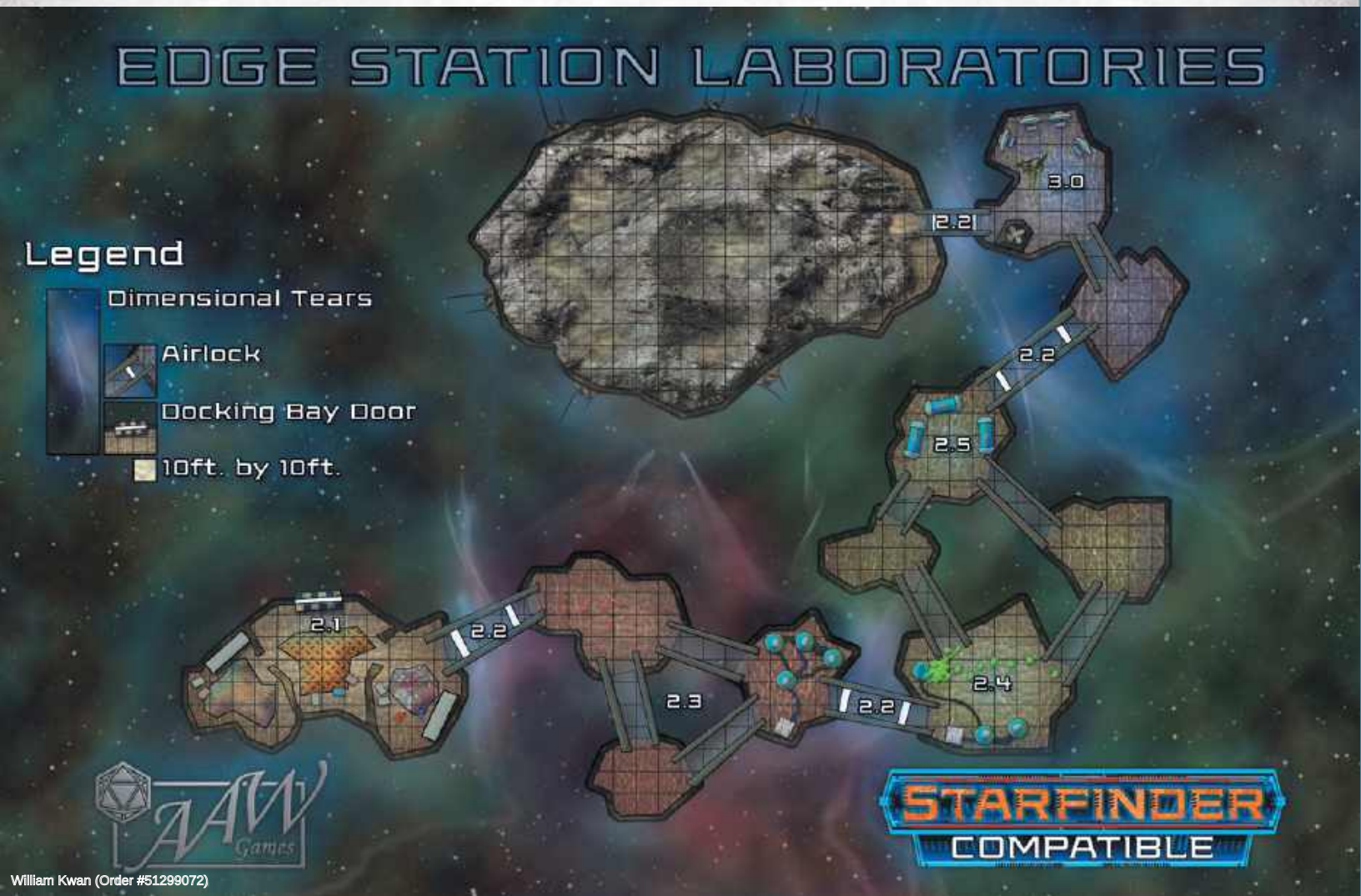
[Table 2.2.1] Rift Effects

D%	Rift Effect
1–10	PCs briefly gain an ego-crushing vision of the extreme infinity of the multiverse. Each must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or advance a step on the Charisma poison track [Weakened, Impaired, Pliable, Catatonic, and Dead]. This is a curse effect but can be recovered normally with rest or *remove affliction*.
11–20	PCs must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or become permanently aged 1d6 years and gain the fatigued condition.
21–30	PCs are exposed to low level radiation (Constitution poison track; Fortitude DC 13).
31–40	PCs must all succeed on a DC 12 Reflex save or take 1d6+3 points of fire damage.
41–50	PCs must succeed on a DC 11 Will save or become confused for 1 round (as the *lesser confusion* spell) by strange visions of alternate timelines.
51–60	PC's physical appearance changes in some overt or major fashion, such as many tattoos, a difficult to conceal scar, or a complete wardrobe change.
61–70	PC's physical appearance changes slightly in some minor fashion, such as gaining a hidden tattoo, piercing, small birthmark, or gaining some item of clothing not previously possessed.
71–80	No discernable effect.
81–90	Each player can optionally choose to immediately alter their PC's race or alter any non-mechanical physical traits of their character (appearance, gender, fashion, etc.). This functions as the *reincarnate* spell, except PC does not gain any Constitution drain or lose any spell slots, and can perfectly recall their former life and form.
91–100	PCs gain the benefits of a full 8 hours of uninterrupted rest unless they have already rested or gained this benefit that day. If they have already rested, this result has no discernible effect.



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into humanoid physiology. Each trap is composed of enslaved, their bodies now distorted, their species unidentifiable. Each trap requires either Life Science or Medicine to disable. Though technically alive, the traps do not gain the benefits of fast healing as the plane's traits are just enough to keep them from dying.

[Creatures] The laboratory areas are overseen by one enslaved in the adjoining asteroid area, dutifully recording data. The PCs can potentially Bluff their way past the enslaved with a DC 10 check, or DC 15 if they've activated either trap. If the station is on high alert, there are two hidden enslaved hoping to ambush the PCs after they trigger the neural net trap.

NEURAL NET TRAP

1 CR | 400 XP

Type organic; Perception DC 17; **Disable** Life Science or Medicine DC 12

Trigger location; **Init** +4; **Reset** immediate

EAC 9, **KAC** 13; **HP** 12

Bypass stepping around pain receptors (Acrobatics DC 10)

Effect An enslaved's central nervous system has been spread out to cover the entire floor of this laboratory. The creature's remaining head and lungs scream in pain when its nerve endings are walked on, alerting the nearby enslaved in the adjoining asteroid if it is triggered.

NERVOUS SYSTEM TRAP

1/2 CR | 200 XP

Type organic; Perception DC 21; **Disable** Life Science or Medicine DC 16

Trigger location; **Init** +6; **Reset** 1 minute

EAC 10, **KAC** 14; **HP** 19

Bypass stepping around neural net (Acrobatics DC 10)

Effect The removed brains of four different humanoid races were placed into jars, but networked together in constant telepathic communication. The druune hope they might eventually recover from their insanity. Anyone moving through the room without taking care to avoid the neural net is assaulted by the mind's telepathic madness, taking 2d10 damage (as the *mind thrust* spell). A DC 12 **Will** save halves the damage. The telepathic feedback also mentally alerts the nearby enslaved in the adjoining asteroid if it is triggered.

DRUUNE ENSLAVED

1/2 CR | 200 XP

Full statblock on page 14.

[2.4] Genetic Modification

Huge vats of yellow and red liquids contain twitching humanoid bodies in various stages of liquefaction... like wax melting in an oven. Some appear almost fully formed, while others are so melted only bits of hair or misshapen bone are left to identify the victim.

Druune are aware on a microscopic level, acting as a hive mind of cells all consciously set to a purpose. From their perspective, life from this reality is... horrifically stupid. A single druune is better compared to an entire city (or even world) of humanoids in its capacity for rational thought. While the druune are empathic beings (they would in fact argue vastly more empathic), they place laughably low worth on a single humanoid life or mind. The druune, in their generosity, hope to someday similarly elevate the poor, stupid beasts of the Coalition.

Fortunately, their efforts to rewrite humanoids cellular genetics to be more like their own have met mostly with failure. Only in these planar-controlled laboratories have they had any progress. Still, the resulting ooze-like creature possesses little cogency, but the druune are confident success is merely a matter of time.

[Planar Traits] This portion of the facility has the enhanced magic (conjuration and transmutation schools) and timeless planar traits. All conjuration and transmutation spells are cast at +2 caster level, and creatures within do not feel hunger, thirst, do not age, and are unaffected by poison. The effects then impact any creature exiting the area retroactively. Any transmutation or conjuration spell or effect entering or occurring within these areas has a duration of permanent. The spell or effect ends when an affected creature or object exits through a rift.

[Hazard] If the station is on high alert, the enslaved release the humanoid ooze moving to their assigned positions. The ooze has crawled around the laboratory, leaving behind a slime trail in a path around the floor. This functions as the *grease* spell (Reflex DC 12).

[Creatures] If the station is not on high alert, an enslaved monitors the vats containing the humanoids in various stages of splicing. The PCs can deceive the enslaved with a successful DC 10 Bluff check. If they fail to successfully lie, the enslaved releases the humanoid ooze and flees to **area 2.5**. The humanoid ooze depends on the area's unique planar traits for survival, and automatically dies if it crosses through a rift.

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Humanoid Ooze

3 CR | 800 XP

N Medium ooze
Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception –5

Defense

HP 40

EAC 14, **KAC** 16
Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0
Immune mind-affecting effects, ooze immunities

Offense

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee slam +5 (1d6+4)
Special Attacks slime trail

Statistics

Str +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** —, **Wis** –5, **Cha** –5
Noncombat Abilities compression

Special Abilities

Slime Trail (Ex) A humanoid ooze leaves behind a trail of slime that acts as a *grease* spell (DC 12). The slime evaporates up after 2 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

[2.5] Cloning Chamber

This area contains large vats of pearlescent liquid. Floating within, covered in umbilical tubes and sensor wires, are humanoid bodies in various stages of development, from fetus to maturity. Each specimen has an unnatural deformity: pustules for eyes, tentacle fingers, or multiple faces across the body.

The druune reproduce asexually, and knew of no other method until entering the Coalition's reality. They cannot help but find sexual reproduction inefficient, but they see within it the potential to create a more perfect life form, possibly even surpassing themselves. Thus, they have begun researching humanoid cloning.

[Hazard] If the station is on high alert or the enslaved from **area 2.4** successfully reaches this area, it releases the gestating clones as it retreats toward the main station. The viscous embryonic fluid creates difficult terrain across the laboratory. If the station is not in high alert, the area only becomes difficult terrain if at least two clones are released.

[Creatures] If the station is on high alert, two clones have been released before the PCs arrive in the area, and an additional clone is released every round thereafter (up to eight). These clones are

Druune Enslaved Clone

1/8 CR | 50 XP

N Medium aberration
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception –2

Defense

HP 13

EAC 11, **KAC** 9
Fort +2, **Ref** –1, **Will** +0

Offense

Speed 30 ft.
Melee bite +3 (1d6)

Statistics

Str +0, **Dex** –3, **Con** +0, **Int** –1, **Wis** –2, **Cha** –2
Skills Engineering +2, Life Science +2, Pilot +7
Languages Common
Noncombat Abilities shift form

already in their monstrous form. If the enslaved from **area 2.4** reached this area, then only a single clone is active when they arrive (with an additional clone released every round thereafter). If the enslaved from **area 2.4** does not reach **area 2.5**, then the clones are not released from the vats.

The cloning process is far from perfected. Each clone has both the fatigued and sickened conditions already factored into their statblocks. The vats containing the clones can be attacked, killing the clone inside before it can be properly awakened (the vats are hardness 1, and have 2 hit points). Clones perish if they cross a rift.

[3.0] Computer Server

The flashing lights of a massive bank of data servers are slightly obscured by organic growths and interconnecting tendrils, like a massive jellyfish that's eaten a supercomputer. Pooled in front, with a dozen pseudopods reaching into the fleshy technology is a constantly moving and changing mass. The center of the amorphous blob begins to pull itself up into a distorted mockery of the humanoid form.

The druune's unique biology and extradimensional nature allowed them to notice Central's manipulation of the time stream. The aliens experienced a sort of déjà vu, and were able to eventually determine it was no naturally occurring phenomenon. Since that moment, they have been working to train or boost this natural resistance into a true immunity through an unknown number of now lost realities. After studying the rifts, they determined that the distortions should

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provide some additional defense. A single, precious druune has been stationed onsite to both supervise the research, and act as a failsafe for the accumulated data.

From this location, the druune observes the entirety of Edge Station. Should this reality be destroyed, its past self might gain some notion that aids its people in the next iteration.

[Planar Traits] This portion of the facility behaves with a new planar trait—subjective time. This allows for intelligent creatures to affect how time functions for nearby individuals and objects. An intelligent creature within the area can either speed or slow the passage of time for themselves, an unattended object, or mindless creature they can see as a standard action by succeeding on a DC 10 Physical Science or Mysticism check. On a success, the creature can either speed or slow time (or return it to normal). In combat, this functions as either the *haste* or *slow* spell (no save). A creature already altered must be returned to normal time before it can be *hasted* or *slowed* (requiring two successful checks). Out of combat, the passage of time relative to the Material Plane can either be doubled or halved for the individual or object. Intelligent creatures within sight can also be affected, but they can resist the haste or slow effect with a DC 15 Will save.

[Hazard] If the station is on high alert, the druune shuts off artificial gravity in this area. If the station is not on high alert, the druune must use a standard action to shut off the gravity. A PC (or the node) at the cybernetic computer system can turn the gravity back on with a DC 15 Computers or Life Science check.

[Creature] If the station is on high alert, the druune is joined by a pair of enslaved that have already used shift form, gaining a 30 ft. climb speed. Additionally, the druune has used the laboratory's subjective time (see Planar Traits) to haste itself and the enslaved. Then druune would prefer to interrogate the PCs to learn what they know, rather than killing them outright. It attempts to infect as many of the PCs as possible, and then flees with *interplanetary teleport* if reduced to half its maximum hit points or less. See page 15 for statblock.

[Development] After the druune flees, the PCs can install the node into the partially organic computer system. The node works to access as many of the station's records as possible, and uses the monitoring equipment to quickly evaluate the facility's progress on time travel research. The fact that the aliens have an almost working prototype defies all of Central's predictive expectations. Read or paraphrase the following.

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The node brightens with the glowing of eldritch circuitry, which rapidly spreads throughout the partially organic computer system. The glowing sphere pulsates for several moments, before its synthetic voice speaks.

"The druune have defied Central's predictions. There is a prototype temporal consciousness teleportation device within the main facility. I must deliver this data to Central immediately." It pauses before continuing on affected concern and pity. "There is a non-zero chance you are infected by druune cells, and cannot be allowed to escape. Do not investigate the alien research or records. Destroy the prototype if possible. Goodbye."

The node then glows bright red before going completely dark..

Druune Enslaved

CR 1/2 | XP 200

N Medium aberration
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

Defense

HP 13

EAC 12, **KAC** 10
Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Offense

Speed 30 ft.
Melee bite +6 (1d6+3)
Ranged tactical semi-auto pistol +4 (1d6)

Statistics

Str +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0
Skills Engineering +4, Life Science +4, Pilot +9
Languages Common
Noncombat Abilities shift form

Special Abilities

Shift Form (Ex) A druune enslaved possesses the shape of an ordinary humanoid (or other creature type). No known test or magic can reveal its true nature. As a standard action, the enslaved can reveal itself; its anatomy contorts into a terrible and monstrous form known as a druune infest. In its natural form, the enslaved gains a natural attack (1d6 damage for a Medium creature) and grants the enslaved any one of the following abilities: blindsense 60 ft., breath weapon (10-ft. line, 2d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 9 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds), brute (–2 to hit, but +2 to damage with natural attacks), climb speed 30 ft., extra hit points (+3 HP), fast healing 1, swim speed 30 ft., or immunity to acid, cold, electricity, or fire. Once an enslaved transforms in this manner, the change is permanent and it cannot return to its original form.

:Conclusion

The PCs are abandoned by the self-destructing node. The device decides they are compromised and cannot be depended on to eliminate this threat. It must immediately begin sending this information back to Central through the Drift. After all, the druune would have used the prototype before now if it they could, so it must have flaws. Central's reality can still be corrected with a severe enough alteration.

To make matters worse, one or more of the PCs might have been infected by the druune, beginning a transformation into one of the enslaved. In next adventure in the Future's Past series, Paying Forward, the PCs must fight their way to the time machine at the heart of Edge Station, struggle against the alien corruption taking over their minds, and learn Central's dark secret.

Druune Infection

Type disease (contact or injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 15
Track special; **Onset** 1 minute; **Frequency** 1/day
Effect Druune infection uses the following special disease track, representing the alien cells slowly spreading and taking control of the host on a cellular level while forming a telepathic bond with the greater druune organism.
[Latent] The victim has contracted the druune infection. She suffers no ill effects yet.
[Communication] The druune who infected the victim can communicate with them as the *telepathic message* spell, except it functions over any range (but not across planar boundaries).
[Linked] The druune can share information with the victim as the *mind link* spell, except it functions over any range (but not across planar boundaries).
[Brainwashed] The victim regards any druune or their allies as a trusted friend and ally (as the *charm monster* spell).
[Controlled] The victim must obey all suggestions from a druune (per the charm monster spell) with no opposed Charisma check necessary, and obeys even suicidal or obviously harmful orders.
[Enslaved] The victim gains the shift form ability of a druune enslaved.
Cure 3 consecutive saves

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DRUUNE

CR 4 | XP 1,200

N Large aberration
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

EAC 16, **KAC** 17
HP 45
Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9
Defensive Abilities regeneration 1; **Immune** ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee pseudopod +11 (1d4+5 plus infection)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Spell-like Abilities (CL 4th)
1/week—*interplanetary teleport*, *retrocognition*
1/day—*inject nanobots* (DC 13), *mind thrust* (1st, DC 13)
At will—*comprehend languages*, *energy ray*, *mind link*, *telepathic message*

STATISTICS

Str +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +5, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3
Skills Computers +15, Engineering +10, Life Science +15, Mysticism +10, Physical Science +15
Noncombat Abilities shifting form

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shifting Form (Ex) As a swift action, a druune can vastly alter its anatomy. This allows the druune to alter its pseudopod attack to any other type of natural attack that does the same damage or gain any one of the following abilities: blindsense 60 ft., breath weapon (15-ft. cone that infects with druune infection, usable every 1d4 rounds), brute (–2 to hit, but +2 to damage with natural attacks), increase existing regeneration to regeneration 2, improved initiative (+4 initiative), swim speed 20 ft., or immunity to acid, cold, electricity, or fire. A druune may only have one ability in this manner at any one time.

Infection (Ex) Druune can infect creatures with their intelligent cells, allowing communication, potential enslavement, and a gradual alteration of the target's genetic code. This functions as a disease that can be spread by contact with the druune, but the infected are not contagious (see Druune Infection sidebar).

Regeneration (Ex) The druune's regeneration only ceases functioning (allowing them to be killed) if they are completely destroyed in some manner (usually requiring a vat of acid or complete incineration).

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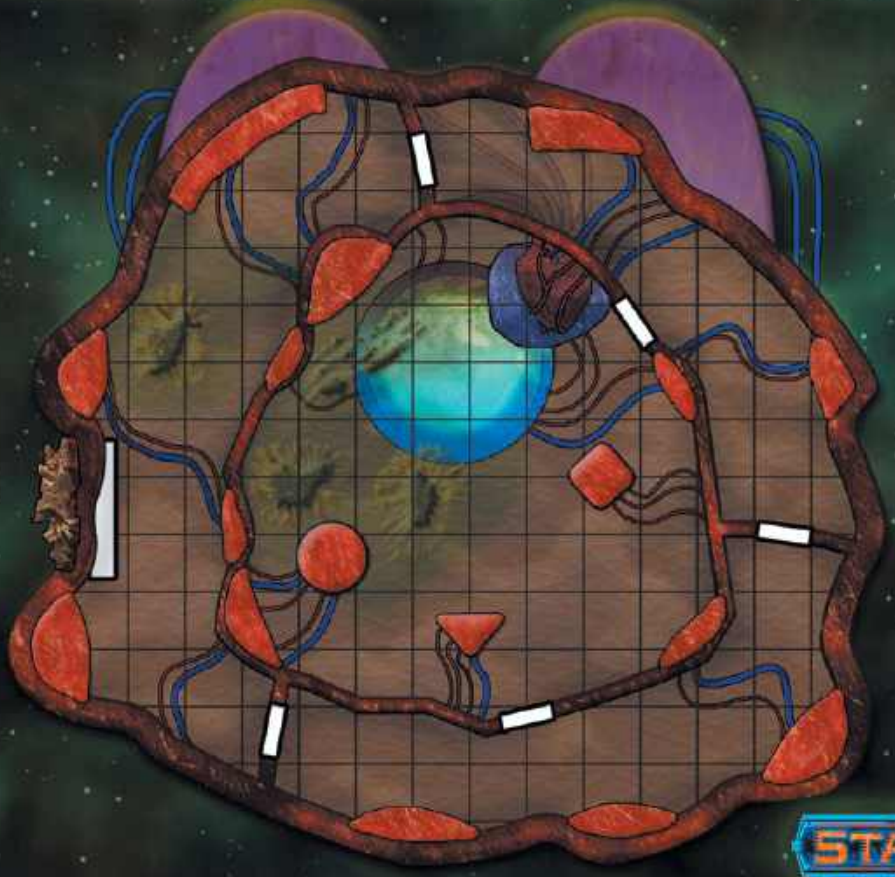
Scavenger Class Druune Ship

5ft. x 5ft.



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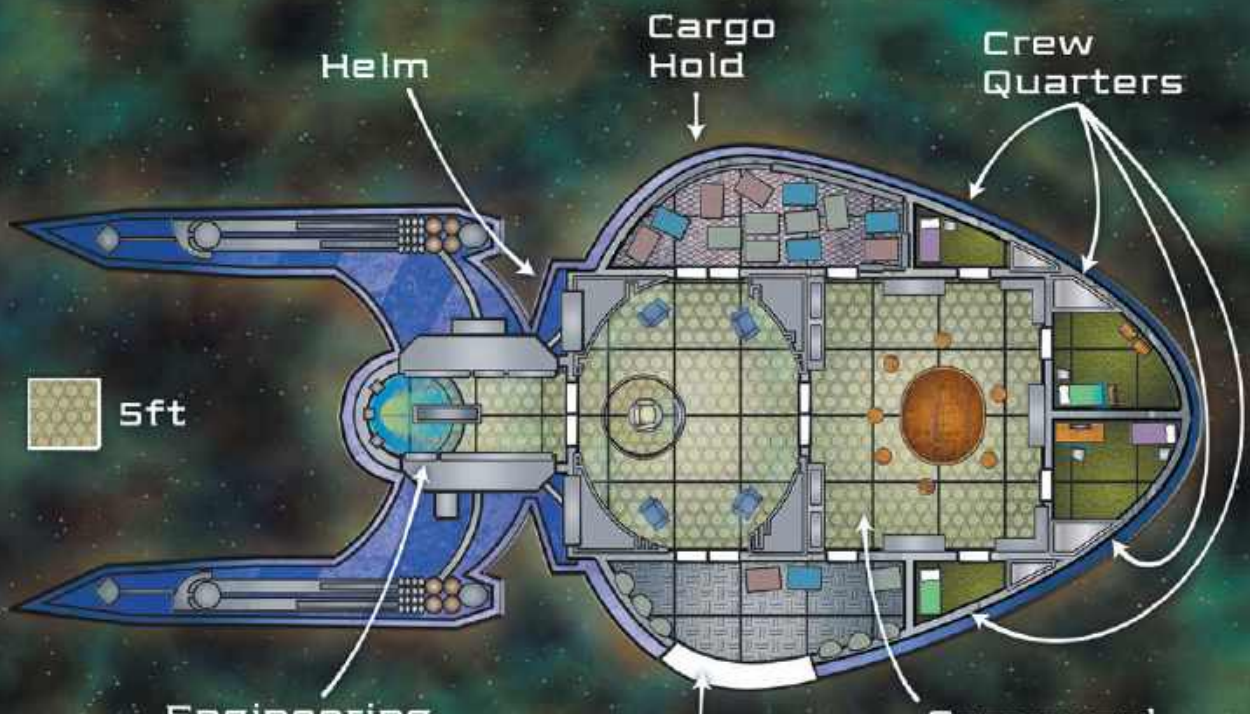
Traveler Class Coalition Ship



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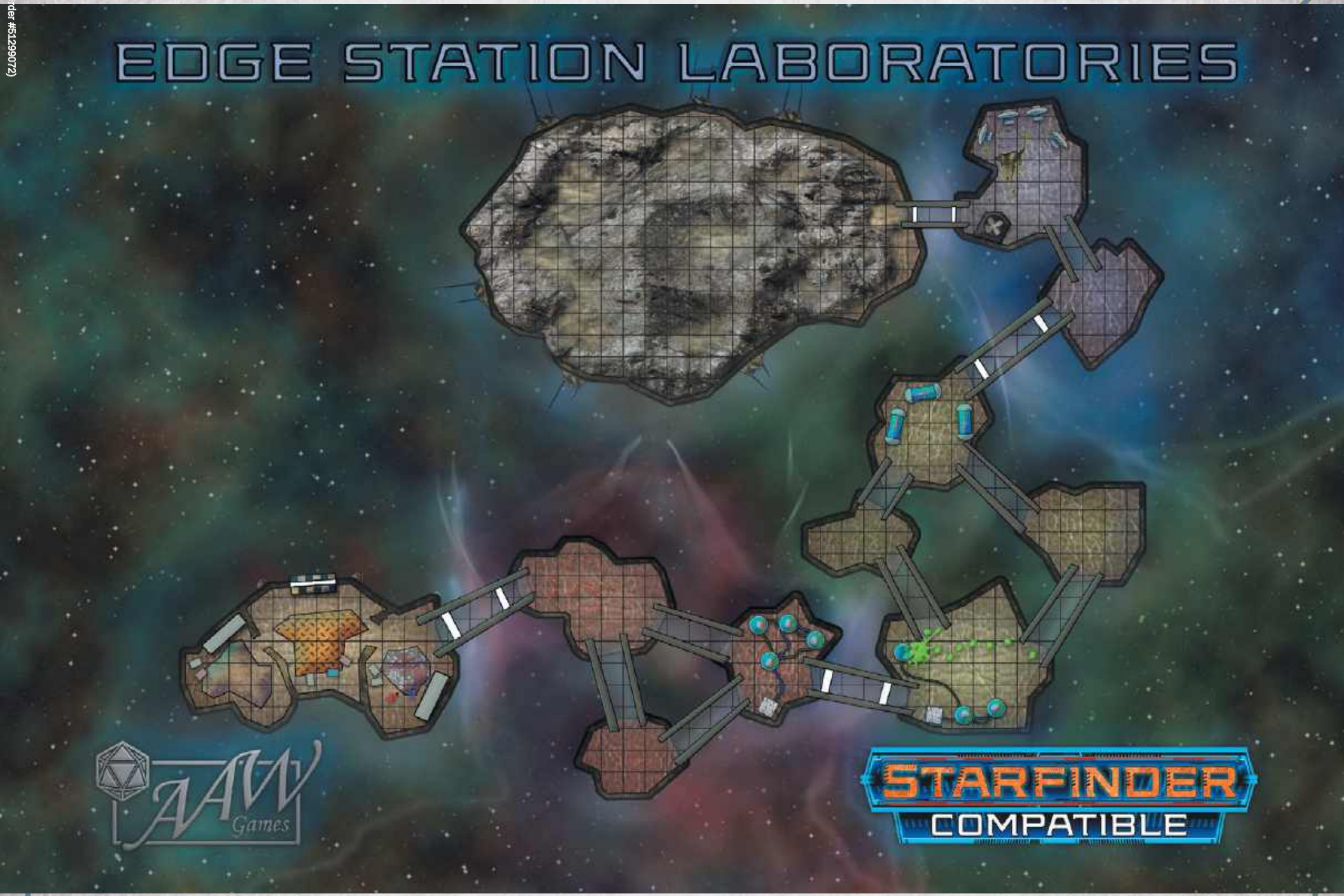
EDGE STATION LABORATORIES



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WELCOME TO THE EDGE

Edge Station floats on the fringes of our reality, where extradimensional rifts tear open strange planes and parallel dimensions. A generation ago the station became the point of first contact with the druune, a truly alien species who seem only interested in destroying the Coalition.

Only with the barely-understood Central Artificial Intelligence has the Coalition been able to hold the line, but reports claim the druune are experimenting with a truly apocalyptic weapon: time travel. The PCs must navigate broken spacetime, infiltrate overrun laboratories, and battle warped monstrosities to seek out the dark truths at the heart of Edge Station.

Edge Station is part one in the five part Future's Past series for the Starfinder Roleplaying Game, for 4-6 1st-level PCs who, by adventure's end, should reach 2nd level... or an unending hellish time loop!

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